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RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT PRIORITY 3552
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY 1788
RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY 4298
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 1172
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 1612
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RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY 5643
RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH PRIORITY 0556
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RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 6629
RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY 9297
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STATE FOR NEA, NEA/IPA, NEA/PPD

WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE, SIT ROOM
NSC FOR NEA STAFF

SECDEF WASHDC FOR USDP/ASD-PA/ASD-ISA
HQ USAF FOR XXXX
DA WASHDC FOR SASA
JOINT STAFF WASHDC FOR PA
CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL FOR POLAD/USIA ADVISOR
COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE FOR PAO/POLAD
COMSIXTHFLT FOR 019

JERUSALEM ALSO ICD
LONDON ALSO FOR HKANONA AND POL
PARIS ALSO FOR POL
ROME FOR MFO

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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [IS](#)

SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:

1. Mideast
2. Iran

Key stories in the media:

Ha'aretz quoted Palestinian sources as saying on Tuesday that
Israel, Egypt, and Hamas are close to a deal to deploy PA President

Mahmoud Abbas's troops at the Gaza crossings. According to the sources, Israel and Hamas have agreed to an Egyptian proposal to deploy the PA Presidential Guard at the Karni, Sufa, and Kerem Shalom crossings (all used for cargo), the Erez crossing (for people and goods), and at the Rafah crossing to Egypt. Hamas forces will be positioned nearby and will essentially control the movement of Palestinian civilians in and out of Gaza. This agreement is in keeping with the 2005 crossings agreement, between the U.S., Israel, and the PA, which called for placing the crossings under forces loyal to Abbas. The Jerusalem Post quoted a senior PA official as saying on Tuesday that Abbas has agreed to resume peace talks with Israel without preconditions. Makor Rishon-Hatzofe quoted the London-based Al-Hayat as saying that Amos Gilad, the head of the Defense Ministry's Diplomatic-Security Bureau, agreed that the IDF will stop its actions in exchange for the cessation of Qassam rocket fire and arms smuggling. Maariv quoted members of the diplomatic-security cabinet as saying that by adopting a policy akin to a cease-fire, Israel is playing into Hamas's hands.

Ha'aretz and Makor Rishon-Hatzofe quoted U.S. and Western officials as saying that the U.S. is not satisfied with the pace at which Israel is moving to implement the Roadmap. Officials were quoted as saying that Washington also believed the Palestinians needed to do far more to meet their obligations to boost security and rein in militants in the West Bank, though U.S. officials have privately complained to Israel that its frequent raids are undermining these efforts. Makor Rishon-Hatzofe quoted U.S. Security Coordinator Lt. Gen. Keith Dayton as saying that Defense Minister Ehud Barak and Israel's defense establishment had become an obstacle to the PA's success in instilling order and security in the West Bank cities.

Ha'aretz reported that in a letter to FM Tzipi Livni on Tuesday,

Ahmed Qurei, who heads the Palestinian team in the Israel-PA negotiations, expressed "shock and dismay" at the settlement activities. Qurei wrote that the construction in the settlements is a violation of the Roadmap and of international law. Qurei's letter to Livni comes after Israel announced that PM Ehud Olmert had authorized construction of 750 housing units in a Givat Ze'ev neighborhood, over the Green Line in Jerusalem, as well as reports of plans to build more housing in East Jerusalem areas. However, Qurei was also quoted as saying that he supports the upcoming trilateral meeting with the Americans which will monitor compliance by Israel and the PA of phase one obligations under the Roadmap.

The Jerusalem Post quoted Shas politicians as saying that construction of housing projects in several large settlement blocs will be authorized, while others already have received a green light. Ha'aretz reported that Shas Chairman and cabinet minister Eli Yishai told the newspaper on Tuesday that PM Olmert should immediately unfreeze construction in the Jewish Kidmat Zion neighborhood within the Arab village of Abu Dis that Israel considers to be within Jerusalem municipal boundaries. Makor Rishon-Hatzofe cited similar comments by Yishai.

Last night Israel TV reported that rabbis have approved retaliation plans by graduates of the Mercaz Harav Yeshiva for last week's terrorist attack. The TV station said that an Arab figure linked with the Temple Mount was targeted. Israel Radio cited protests and demands for apology by religious-Zionist notables. Leading media reported that on Tuesday Tali Fahima, a Jewish Israeli woman who was closely associated with Jenin's Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, visited the mourners' tent for the terrorist who carried out the killings at the Mercaz Harav Yeshiva.

Israel Radio cited the State Department's 2007 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices as saying that Syria is supporting terrorist organizations that are trying to undermine stability in Lebanon, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The report also said that Iran continues to support extremist organizations in Syria, Iraq, and Lebanon and to call for the destruction of Israel. In the chapter on Israel, the report said that there has been no real change in the human rights situation. The report said that in Israel there is discrimination against non-Jews, traffic in human beings and discrimination against non-Orthodox Jews.

Major media reported that on Tuesday FM Tzipi Livni spoke by phone to Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama, with whom she

discussed the Iranian nuclear threat. Obama also sent his condolences to the families of the victims of last week's attack on the Mercaz Harav Yeshiva.

The Jerusalem Post reported that international law expert Prof. Ruth Lapidot told the Knesset's Constitution, Law, and Justice Committee on Tuesday that the government was not violating the Basic Law -Jerusalem - by negotiating with the PA on changes in sovereignty over various parts of the city. Article 5 of the Basic Law states that the boundaries of the city are those established on June 28, 1967.

Leading media reported that rockets struck southern Ashkelon on Tuesday, one hour after PM Olmert's solidarity visit to the city. Israel Radio reported that this morning IDF troops killed the commander of Islamic Jihad in Tulkarm.

Yediot reported that over the weekend the Israeli airline Arkia flew Jordanian troops to Haiti. The Jordanians joined the peace force stationed on the island.

Israel Radio reported that Martin Luther King III, the son of the late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., has arrived in Israel upon the invitation of supporters of the Geneva Initiative.

Maariv reported that Israeli Druze have started a struggle to return to their hands land confiscated by Israel.

Ha'aretz and Yediot extensively reported on the resignation of CENTCOM Commander Admiral William Fallon over "opposition to war on Iran."

Major media reported that State Comptroller Micha Lindenstrauss secretly left for Addis Ababa to check the status of the Falash Mura

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-- Ethiopians whose Jewish ancestors converted to Christianity.

Leading media reported that on Tuesday Justice Minister Daniel announced that he was freezing his initiative to keep the High Court of Justice in check.

Yediot and Maariv reported that Moscow's Central Court ruled on Wednesday that former IDF Lt. Col. Yair Klein should be extradited to Colombia. Klein was convicted by judicial authorities in Colombia for training several members of Colombian paramilitary groups and the militias of drug traffickers such as Gonzalo Rodriguez Gacha and Pablo Escobar Gaviria in 1987. Ha'aretz and The Jerusalem Post reported that a Knesset caucus to promote western immigration was formed on Tuesday.

Leading media reported that Mark (a.k.a. Michael) Brenner, an Israeli citizen, was involved in the prostitution ring that provided services to New York Governor Eliot Spitzer.

1. Mideast:

Summary:

Arab affairs correspondent Smadar Perry wrote in the mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot: "Syria will try its utmost to fan the flames [at the Arab League Summit]. What should not be achieved is calm. Otherwise, what would be the talk of the summit?"

Senior columnist Haggai Huberman wrote in the nationalist, Orthodox Makor Rishon-Hatzofe: "All previous 'hudnas' and 'tahdiyas' ended with the resumption of terrorist attacks."

Prominent playwright Yehoshua Sobol, a former liberal who has become a skeptic of the peace process, wrote in the independent Israel Hayom: "Before the Palestinians unleash a third Intifada on the world, thought should be given to the total indifference that it will engender towards the bitter fate that will befall their people, just as the legacy of the second Intifada was indifference to the

suffering of Palestinian civilians."

Block Quotes:

I. "Assad's Big Show"

Arab affairs correspondent Smadar Perry wrote in the mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot (3/12): "On one hand, it is worthwhile for [Bashar] Assad to recycle (for the third time) at the Damascus Summit the Saudi Peace Plan that offers Israel 'full Arab peace' in exchange for an 'Israeli withdrawal from all occupied territories.' What's wrong about that? Syria will be painted as an untiring peace-lover; Israel might be finally convinced to take seriously the Syrian channel.... [On the other hand] a miracle happened to Assad.... In the tradition of the Arab summits, Israel will once again headline the agenda.... There will be belligerent declarations and threats, and demands of Abu Mazen that he embrace Mashal. Syria will try its utmost to fan the flames. What should not be achieved is calm. Otherwise, what would be the talk of the summit?"

II. "Cease-Fires as the Basis for a Harsh War"

Senior columnist Haggai Huberman wrote in the nationalist, Orthodox Makor Rishon-Hatzofe (3/12): "If the [Israeli] government has indeed agreed to a 'tahdiya' [truce], this would represent a further resounding failure for the Olmert government, which is unable to find an effective way to stop the missile fire at the Negev without surrendering to Hamas's dictates.... All previous 'hudnas' and 'tahdijas' ended with the resumption of terrorist attacks. Over the past year and a half, there was no 'hudna' with any Palestinian body. Therefore there were no terrorist attacks."

III. "Terrorism as a Breeder of Indifference"

Prominent playwright Yehoshua Sobol, a former liberal who has become a skeptic of the peace process, wrote in the independent Israel Hayom (3/12): "The English are not a barbaric people.... In the German blitz, the English experienced a new kind of brutal terrorism aimed at causing mass murder of civilians and breaking the spirit of the British nation. But the main achievement of Nazi terrorism was to make the British more stiff-necked, or -- in the picturesque language of the British -- to stiffen their upper lip. The cumulative effect was that the British became indifferent to the hundreds of thousands of civilian deaths which the RAF left behind it in its bombing of German cities.... Before the Palestinians unleash a third Intifada on the world, thought should be given to the total indifference that it will engender towards the bitter fate that will befall their people, just as the legacy of the second Intifada was indifference to the suffering of Palestinian civilians."

12. Iran:

Summary:

Veteran journalist and former justice minister Yosef (Tommy) Lapid wrote in the popular, pluralist Maariv: "As crazy, blood-thirsty, and fanatical as they can be, [Israel's enemies] will not sacrifice everything they hold dear in order to destroy the 'Zionist entity.'"

Block Quotes:

"Balance of Terror"

Veteran journalist and former justice minister Yosef (Tommy) Lapid wrote in the popular, pluralist Maariv (3/12): "I can't guarantee that there won't be earthquakes. But, as to the danger that Israel will be destroyed by its enemies, I can vouch that this will never happen.... Assad would have been happy to raze Tel Aviv, and Ahmadinejad threatens to erase Israel from the map. But Assad is not interested in the destruction of Damascus; neither would

Ahmadinejad risk the disappearance of Tehran. As crazy, blood-thirsty, and fanatical as they can be, they will not sacrifice everything they hold dear in order to destroy the 'Zionist entity.' This is called the 'balance of terror.' It worked in the U.S.-USSR conflict called the Cold War; it will work in the conflict between us and our enemies."

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